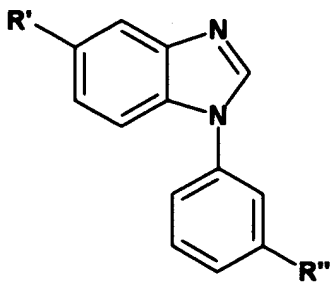
AMENDED CLAIM SET:

1. (currently amended) A benzimidazole derivative represented by the general Formula I,



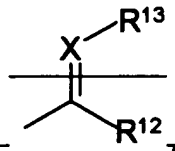
(I)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof,

wherein,

R′ represents a group of the formula $-(alk)_q-R^1$, wherein (alk) represents alkyl, alkenyl or alkynyl, q is 0 or 1, R^1 represents a group of the formula $-CO_2R^2$, wherein R^2 represents hydrogen, alkyl, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, thioalkoxy-alkyl, alkyl-"Heterocycle", or $-alkyl-NR^3R^4$, wherein "Heterocycle" represents a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, cyano, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl, and a group of the formula $-(alkyl)_p-CN$, $-(alkyl)_p-aryl$, $-(alkyl)_p-$"Heterocycle", $-(alkyl)_p-CO_2-$"Heterocycle" or -(alkyl-

$CO_2)_s$-(alkyl)$_t$-COR^5, in which formulas p, s and t independently of each another is 0 or 1, "Heterocycle" represents a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, cyano, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl, R^5 represents hydroxy, alkoxy, hydroxy-alkoxy, alkoxy-alkoxy, thioalkoxy-alkoxy, or a group of the formula $-NR^6R^7$ or -O-alkyl-NR^6R^7, in which formulas R^6 and R^7 independently of each another represent hydrogen, alkyl, cycloalkyl or a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl, or R^6 and R^7 together with the nitrogen to which they are attached form a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group may be substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl; and R^3 and R^4 independently of each another represent hydrogen, alkyl or cycloalkyl, or R^3 and R^4 together with the nitrogen to which they are attached form a mono- or poly-cyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl; ~~or R^1~~

represents a group of the formula  , wherein X represents N or CH, R^{12} represents hydrogen, alkyl, alkoxy or hydroxy-alkyl, and R^{13} represents hydrogen, hydroxy, alkyl, alkoxy or hydroxy-alkyl; or R^1 represents a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of alkyl, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl, and acyl, and a group of the formula $-(alkyl)_p$-aryl, $-(alkyl)_p$-"Heterocycle", $-(alkyl)_p$-CN or $-(alkyl-CO_2)_s-(alkyl)_t-COR^5$, in which formulas p, s and t independently of each another is 0 or 1, "Heterocycle" represents a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, cyano, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl, R^5 represents hydroxy, alkoxy, hydroxy-alkoxy, alkoxy-alkoxy, thioalkoxy-alkoxy, or a group of the formula $-NR^6R^7$ or $-O-alkyl-NR^6R^7$, in which formulas R^6 and R^7 independently of each another represent hydrogen, alkyl, cycloalkyl or a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl, or R^6 and R^7 together with the nitrogen to which they are

~~attached form a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl;~~ and

R'' represents -(alkyl)$_o$-"Heterocycle" ~~or -(alkyl)$_o$-CO_2-(alkyl)$_u$-"Heterocycle", wherein o and u independently of each another is 0 or 1,~~ wherein o is 1 and "Heterocycle" represents a ~~mono- or polycyclic~~ monocyclic heterocyclic group selected from a thienyl group, a pyrrolyl group, an imidazolyl group, an oxazolyl group, and isoxazolyl group, an oxadiazolyl group, a pyridinyl group, or a tetrazolyl group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, cyano, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl, and acyl, and a group of the formula -(alkyl)$_p$-CN, -(alkyl)$_p$-aryl, -(alkyl)$_p$-aralkyl, -(alkyl)$_p$-O-aryl, -(alkyl)$_p$-O-aralkyl, -(alkyl)$_p$-CO_2-aryl, -(alkyl)$_p$-CO_2-aralkyl, -(alkyl)$_p$-"Heterocycle", -(alkyl)$_p$-CO_2-"Heterocycle" or -(alkyl-CO_2)$_s$-(alkyl)$_t$-COR^5, in which formulas p, s and t independently of each another is 0 or 1, "Heterocycle" represents a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, cyano, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl, R^5 represents

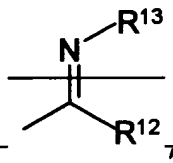
hydrogen, hydroxy, alkyl, alkoxy, hydroxy-alkyl, hydroxy-alkoxy, alkoxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkoxy, thioalkoxy-alkyl, thioalkoxy-alkoxy, or a group of the formula $-NR^6R^7$ or $-O-alkyl-NR^6R^7$, in which formulas R^6 and R^7 independently of each another represent hydrogen, alkyl, cycloalkyl or a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl, or R^6 and R^7 together with the nitrogen to which they are attached form a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl~~, or R'' represents $-(alkyl)_m-CO_2R^8$, wherein m is 0 or 1, and R^8 represents hydrogen, alkyl, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, thioalkoxy-alkyl, or a group of the formula $-(alkyl)_p-NR^9R^{10}$, wherein p is 0 or 1, and R^9 and R^{10} independently of each another represent hydrogen, alkyl, cycloalkyl, or a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl, or R^9 and R^{10} together with the nitrogen to which they are attached form a mono- or polycyclic heterocyclic group, which heterocyclic group is optionally~~

~~substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, hydroxy, oxo, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, carboxyl and acyl~~.

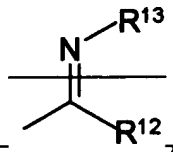
2. (cancelled).

3. (cancelled).

4. (currently amended) The benzimidazole derivative of claim 1, wherein R^1 represents a group of the formula $-CO_2R^2$, wherein R^2 represents alkyl, hydroxy-alkyl, alkoxy-alkyl, thioalkoxy-alkyl, or alkyl-$N(alkyl)_2$

~~, or R^1 represents a group of the formula~~  ~~, wherein R^{12} represents alkyl, and R^{13} represents hydroxy, or alkoxy; or R^1 represents a furanyl group, a pyrazolyl group, an isoxazolyl group, an oxazolyl group, an oxadiazolyl group~~.

5. (currently amended) The benzimidazole derivative of claim 4, wherein R^1 represents a group of the formula -COOH, $-CO_2-CH_3$, $-CO_2-C_2H_5$, $-CO_2-CH_2-CH(OH)$, $-CO_2(CH_2)_2OCH_3$, $-CO_2(CH_2)_2SCH_3$, $-CO_2(CH_2)_2SC_2H_5$, or $-CO_2(CH_2)_2N(CH_3)_2$~~; or R^1 represents a group of the~~

~~formula~~  ~~, wherein R^{12} represents methyl or ethyl, and R^{13} represents hydroxy, methoxy or ethoxy; or R^{1} represents a 2- or 3-furanyl group~~.

6. (cancelled).

7. (currently amended) The benzimidazole derivative of either of claims 4-5, wherein R'' represents a group of the formula -(alkyl)$_o$-"Heterocycle", wherein o is ~~0 or~~ 1, and "Heterocycle" represents a furanyl group, ~~a 2H-furanyl group, a 4H-furanyl group,~~ a thienyl group, a pyrrolyl group, ~~a 2H-pyrrolyl (pyrrolinyl) group, a 4H-pyrrolyl (pyrrolidinyl) group,~~ an imidazolyl group, an oxazolyl group, ~~a 2H-oxazolyl (oxazolinyl) group, a 4H-oxazolyl (oxazolidinyl) group,~~ an isoxazolyl group, ~~a 2H-isoxazolyl (isoxazolinyl) group, a 4H-isoxazolyl (isoxazolidinyl) group,~~ an oxadiazolyl group, ~~a 2H-oxadiazolyl (oxadiazolinyl) group, a 4H-oxadiazolyl (oxadiazolidinyl) group, a morpholinyl group, a thiomorpholinyl group,~~ a pyridinyl group, ~~a piperidinyl group, a piperazine group, a homopiperazine group,~~ or a tetrazolyl group, which heterocyclic groups may be substituted one or more times with substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, oxo, acyl, alkyl-CO_2H, alkyl-CO_2-alkyl -(alkyl)$_p$-CO_2-aryl, -(alkyl)$_p$-

CO_2-aralkyl and alkyl-CO_2-alkyl-$CONR^6R^7$, wherein R^6 and R^7 independently of each another represent hydrogen or alkyl.

8. (currently amended) The benzimidazole derivative of claim 7, wherein "Heterocycle" represents ~~a pyrrolidin-1-yl; a piperazin-1-yl; a homopiperazin-1-yl;~~ an imidazol-1-yl; a pyridin-4-yl; ~~a 4H-pyridin-4-yl, in particular a 1,2,5,6-tetrahydro-pyridin-4-yl;~~ or a piperidin-4-yl~~; a 2H-isoxazol-3-yl, in particular a 4,5-dihydro-isoxazol-3-yl~~ group.

9. (currently amended) The benzimidazole derivative of claim 8, wherein R'' represents ~~4-ethoxycarbonyl-1-imidazolyl; 4-methoxycarbonyl-1-imidazolyl; 5-((N,N-Diethylcarbamoyl)-methoxycarbonylmethyl)-4,5-dihydroisoxazol-3-yl; 5-((N,N-Dimethylcarbamoyl)-methoxycarbonylmethyl)-4,5-dihydroisoxazol-3-yl;~~ 1-imidazolylmethyl~~; 4-(1-methyl-5-tetrazolyl)-methyl-1-piperazinyl; 1-ethyl-1,2,5,6-tetrahydropyridin-4-yl; 4-(2-oxazolidinone-5-yl)-methyl)1-piperazinyl; 4-(5-methyloxadiazol-3-yl)-methyl)1-piperazinyl; 4-(3,5-dimethylisoxazol-4-yl)-methyl)1-piperazinyl; 4-(2-oxo-tetrahydrofuran-3-yl)-1-piperazinyl; 4-(2-chloro-5-thienyl)-methyl-1-piperazinyl; or (1-methyl-2-pyrrolidyl)-methylcarbonyl~~.

10. (currently amended) The benzimidazole derivative of claim 9, which is

~~2-Methoxyethyl 1-(3-(4-methoxycarbonyl-1-imidazolyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;~~

~~(N,N-Diethylcarbamoyl)-methyl 2-(3-[3-(5-ethoxycarbonyl-1-benzimidazolyl)-phenyl]-4,5-dihydroxyisoxazol-5-yl)-acetate;~~

Methyl 1-(3-(1-imidazolylmethyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;

2-(Methylthio)-ethyl 1-(3-(1-imidazolylmethyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;

~~2-Methoxyethyl 1-(3-(4-(1-methyl-5-tetrazolyl)methyl-1-piperazinyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;~~

~~2-Methoxyethyl 1-(3-(1-ethyl-1,2,5,6-tetrahydropyridin-4-yl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;~~

~~2-Methoxyethyl 1-(3-(4-(2-oxazolidinone-5-yl)-methyl)1-piperazinyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;~~

~~2-Methoxyethyl 1-(3-(4-(5-methyloxadiazol-3-yl)-methyl)1-piperazinyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;~~

~~2-Methoxyethyl 1-(3-(4-(3,5-dimethylisoxazol-4-yl)methyl)1-piperazinyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;~~

~~2-Methoxyethyl 1-(3-(4-(2-oxo-tetrahydrofuran-3-yl)-1-piperazinyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;~~

~~2-Methoxyethyl 1-(3-(4-(2-chloro-5-thienyl)-methyl-1-piperazinyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole-5-carboxylate;~~

~~5-(3-Furanyl)-1-(3-(4-methoxycarbonyl-1-imidazolyl)-phenyl)-benzimidazole; or~~

~~N,N-Diethylcarbamoylmethyl 2-(3-(3-(5-(3-furanyl)-1-benzimidazolyl)-phenyl)-4,5-dihydroisoxazole-5-yl)-acetate;~~

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

11. - 17. (cancelled).

18. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition containing a therapeutically effective amount of a benzimidazole derivative according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1-17~~, or a pharmaceutically acceptable addition salt thereof, together with at least one pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, excipient or diluent.

19. (cancelled).

20. (cancelled).

21. (currently amended) A method for treatment~~, prevention~~ or alleviation of ~~a disease or a disorder or a condition~~ fever cramps or *status epilepticus* of a living animal body, including a human, ~~which disorder, disease or condition~~ wherein said fever cramps or *status epilepticus* is responsive to modulation of the GABA receptor

complex, which method comprises the step of administering to such a living animal body in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of a benzimidazole derivative according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1-17~~.

22. (currently amended) A method ~~The method according to claim 21,~~ for the induction or maintenance of anaesthesia or pre-anaesthesia in a living animal body, including a human, ~~muscle relaxation or sedation, or for the treatment, prevention or alleviation of fewer cramps or status epilepticus~~ which method comprises the step of administering to such a living animal an amount of a benzimidazole derivative according to claim 1 effective to induce or maintain anaesthesia or pre-anaesthesia.